

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 DLOS-06 EB-11 INT-08 EPA-04

CEQ-02 SCI-06 DODE-00 L-03 CIAE-00 COME-00 FMC-04

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 FEA-02 (ISO) R

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DRAFTED BY: ARA/CAR:GBHIGH

APPROVED BY: ARA/CAR:JRBURKE

INTERIOR: MPROCHNIK(DRAFT)

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TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, DR, US

SUBJECT: PETROLEUM: PUERTO RICAN SUPERPORT

REFERENCE: SANTO DOMINGO 0025

1. FOLLOWING IS BACKGROUND TO DECEMBER 31 AND JANUARY 8
ARTICLES IN SAN JUAN STAR REPORTING ALLEGED US INTERIOR DEPT
TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION AGAINST MONA ISLAND DEEPWATER
PORT PROJECT.

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2. INTERIOR DEPT HAS NOT TAKEN OFFICIAL STAND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WITH REGARD TO THE PORT. SAN JUAN REPORTING APPARENTLY WAS BASED ON FACT THAT A TASK FORCE WITHIN DEPT OF INTERIOR IS CONDUCTING STUDY OF MONA, MONITO AND DESECHEO ISLANDS OFF PUERTO RICO TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT TO DESIGNATE ONE OR MORE AS "NATIONAL LANDMARK." (ACCORDING TO DEPT OF INTERIOR, DESIGNATION OF SITE OR AREA AS "NATIONAL LANDMARK" IS INTENDED TO IDENTIFY AND REGISTER IT BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORICAL, ARCHEOLOGICAL, NATURAL OR OTHER UNIQUE FEATURES. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AFTER APPROPRIATE REVIEW OF ALL FACTORS MAY MAKE SUCH DESIGNATION. THIS DOES NOT RESTRICT POSSIBLE USE OF THE LANDMARK FOR PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PURPOSES BUT DOES MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE HIGH LEVEL REVIEW OF ANY FEDERALLY INITIATED OR SUPPORTED ACTIVITY TO ASSURE THAT USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH NATURE OF LANDMARK.)

3. IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE, EXAMINATION OF THE THREE ISLANDS BY THE TASK FORCE IS IN RESPONSE TO DESIRE TO INVENTORY THE EXTENT OF THEIR NATURAL AND HISTORICAL FEATURES. IT IS UNRELATED TO PROPOSED DEEPWATER PORT PROJECT OR CONSIDERATION OF NAVAL FIRING RANGE, BUT RECOMMENDATIONS OR DECISION OBVIOUSLY COULD IMPACT ON THESE MATTERS.

4. TASK FORCE FINDINGS ARE NOT EXPECTED BEFORE APRIL AT THE EARLIEST. THESE FINDINGS AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS GO TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF INTERIOR FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS. RECEIPT OF RECOMMENDATIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY EXPEDITIOUS ACTION OR DECISION BY INTERIOR DEPT ON THE MATTER. MOREOVER, AS INTERNAL DOCUMENT, TASK FORCE STUDY DOES NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE MADE PUBLIC, THOUGH PUBLIC AND/OR DIPLOMATIC FACTORS COULD BE A FACTOR IN DECISION TO RELEASE IT.

5. REGARDING ARTICLE IN JANUARY 8 SAN JUAN STAR QUOTING VOW OF "HIGH INTERIOR OFFICIAL" TO WAGE SUSTAINED BATTLE TO DELAY INDEFINITELY CONSTRUCTION OF SUPERPORT AND ALLEGING INTERIOR DEPT IS READY FOR "ALL-OUT WAR" AGAINST THE PORT, NO HIGH OFFICIAL OF INTERIOR DEPT HAS GONE ON RECORD WITH AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE DEEPWATER PORT.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) HAS TAKEN NO STAND ON PORT PROJECT, AND DOES NOT ANTICIPATE TAKING ONE UNTIL IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS STUDIED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE DONE BY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. AS ALREADY EXPLAINED TO PUERTO RICAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES, SO LONG AS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS ARE MET, EPA IS INCLINED AS GENERAL MATTER TO FAVOR DEEPWATER PORT CONSTRUCTION SINCE THIS REDUCES CONGESTION AND DANGER OF COLLISION AT PETROLEUM PORTS.

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